

**To: Interested Parties**

**Fr: Transgender Freedom Alliance**

**Re: Recent transgender attacks and responses**

**Date: 10/17/24**

**Summary:**

The memo outlines a message strategy to address transgender-related attacks in the political arena, particularly those targeting Kamala Harris and her stance on healthcare for transgender prisoners and youth, as well as those targeting Democratic Senators for supporting transgender rights.

The Trump campaign is trying to win at the end with a toxic cocktail of immigration, crime, and anti-transgender attacks. He is trying to scare older non-college women and seniors and is also trying to persuade men, especially men of color. Vice President Harris is not that well known among these voters. Trump is trying to say she is risky, un-American, and does not share voters' values. The Trump campaign is putting tens of millions of dollars behind the transgender attacks. [Vice President Harris's response](#) is strong and tests very well in work outlined here. The Harris responses are the prototype response:

*First*, she does not repeat the charge.

*Second*, she powerfully speaks to the division and distraction that Trump uses to win power and promote himself.

*Third*, she forcefully defines herself and her strong and compassionate leadership, her record of leadership, and her accomplishments.

This is the model answer that can push back against these attacks for candidates up and down the ticket.

In response to specific attacks, such as those targeting healthcare access for transgender prisoners or the involvement of parents in healthcare decisions for transgender youth, we recommend clear, empathetic messaging. For example, Harris's rebuttals effectively move voters by addressing healthcare reform, standing against misleading attack ads, and focusing on the priorities that everyday Americans say are most important to them. The analysis of response tests shows that these messages resonate with voters when they emphasize fairness, inclusivity, and respect for personal freedoms while pushing back against scare tactics and distractions. Trump's anti-transgender attacks are often blended with other hot-button issues—for example, immigration—and therefore broader response messaging is most effective. Also note that when using the shared value of freedom, ***be sure you are clear that you are talking about the freedom of adults or parents, rather than freedom for minors and children, which creates backlash among voters.***

**Messaging Strategy:**

- **Responding is critical**—with evidence-backed messages. These attacks are damaging but responding allows us to regain that lost ground.
- When possible, **DO** use the first message and let that be the end of the discussion ([though in some cases, we know more may be needed](#)).

- If more is needed, **DO** refocus the conversation on the economic priorities that are most important to voters at this moment: lowering costs, raising incomes, affordable healthcare, and more.
- **DO** consider naming what opponents are doing here: trying to create a big panic and stirring up divisions for political gain.
- **DON'T** engage in anything that could register as name-calling. It escalates conflict and may be interpreted by voters as being directed at them.
- **DON'T** get baited into engaging on specific examples.
- Advocate for respect and empathy across all platforms.
- Address complex issues like healthcare, gender identity, forced outing, sports, and bathroom bans with shared values, compassion, and facts.
- Prioritize personal freedoms, especially parental healthcare decision-making (vs. the freedom of young people to decide)
- Reframe divisive issues by shifting focus to universal challenges like the economy, healthcare, and education.
- Deal with immediate attacks now, move to longer term messaging after the election.

### **Senate Attacks:**

We have seen elevated attacks on Senate candidates, particularly in Texas, Ohio, and Wisconsin. In testing the [attack](#) on Senator Sherrod Brown by his opponent Bernie Moreno, we showed that addressing the attack without repeating the charge and then pivoting to the issues that impact Americans day-to-day is an effective response that gains ground.

### **Attack Radio Ad**

Real people in Ohio are learning more and more about the real Sherrod Brown. We thought we knew Sherrod Brown, but we didn't know his voting record. Sherrod voted to let transgender biological men compete in women's sports. And Brown will allow puberty blockers, and even sex surgery for young kids. Under Sherrod Brown's spending and inflation everything is more expensive groceries, gas, housing, even electricity. Sherrod sure had us fooled, he votes a lot differently in DC than he talks here. Washington has clearly changed Sherrod Brown. Sherrod's not the guy we supported years ago - not at all. and what Sherrod Brown's voting for is way too liberal. Sherrod Brown let us down. He's changed, that's why we need to change senators. Senate Leadership Fund paid for and is responsible for the content of this advertising.

### **Shared Values - Pivot Response:**

They're at it again: insurance companies and pharmaceutical giants are flooding the airwaves with misleading ads attacking Sherrod Brown. Why? Because Brown has consistently supported the Affordable Care Act and fought to lower prescription drug prices, threatening their profits. Meanwhile, Bernie Moreno stands with them, backing their agenda to repeal the Affordable Care Act and block efforts to make life-saving medications more affordable. The lobbyists and CEOs propping up Moreno are relying on fear and lies to distract from the truth. But let's focus on what really matters: Sherrod Brown

has spent his entire career fighting for Ohio's working families, while Moreno is beholden to wealthy corporations and the richest 1%. Sherrod Brown works tirelessly to bring good-paying jobs back to Ohio, strengthen labor protections, and make healthcare accessible. Moreno, backed by corporate elites, supports policies that put profits over people. Ohio deserves a leader who fights for working people, not corporate interests. *+5 pp after hearing attack*

### **Recommended Response Message Framework**

- These attacks are designed to tear us apart.
- We need real solutions to the problems we're facing, not politicians stirring up divisions for their own political gain. More than ever, Americans are working hard to make ends meet.
- So while my opponent is trying to divide us, I'm focused on raising incomes, lowering everyday costs, making sure our schools are funded, and ensuring access to affordable healthcare. Everyone is tired of the petty destructive politics. Let's turn the page and chart a new way forward that lifts up all Americans.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the attacks against Kamala Harris as well as Democratic Senate candidates on transgender issues are part of a broader strategy to sow division and distract voters from the real challenges facing our country. However, Harris's well-tested responses provide a strong model for countering these attacks by pushing back against the division and distraction, then emphasizing her record of compassionate leadership, her focus on uniting the nation, and her dedication to ensuring fairness for all. By addressing these issues with clarity, empathy, and a commitment to personal freedoms, we can push back against the fear-mongering tactics and refocus voters' attention on the values that truly matter: equality, justice, and respect for all Americans.